An Interview with Sen. Harry F. Byrd, Jr.

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We enjoy hearing from our readers and welcome suggestions for articles and photographs. Your ideas for subjects for future stories on Valley artists, craftsmen and photographers will be of particular interest to us.
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A Closer Look

Representing the Shenandoah Valley...

...Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr. does it in Congress. A Winchester native, he has very strong ties to the Valley and sees a bright future of growth for the area. He explains his goals, his accomplishments and reveals his warm personality in an exclusive Curio interview beginning on page 6.

...Local landscape artists do it by conveying their impressions of the area on canvas. Three Valley artists and their work are featured in this issue. Although their styles and attitudes about painting differ, each artist finds inspiration in the beauty of the Valley.

...Photographer Walt Morgan of Woodstock's Shenandoah Valley Herald does it on film. His award-winning photographs capture the diversity and flavor of the Valley. His work, as well as an article about him, is featured in Curio's photo gallery.

We at Curio hope we are representing the Valley too, by providing our readers with a sampling of the people and places that make this area such a special place. And some pretty special people have helped us bring this and past issues to you.

Our thanks goes to Dean Donald McConkey of James Madison University's School Of Fine Arts and Communication for his continuing support of the magazine, and to Tommy Thompson for his invaluable help to our photographers.

We would also like to thank Lindsey Boteler, a JMU graduate and former Curio staff member, for his generous contribution to the charity of his choice—Curio! As always, special gratitude goes to our adviser David Wendelken, whose time and efforts make Curio a reality.

Curio is for and about you—the Valley resident and visitor. We welcome your suggestions for articles and hope we may continue to "represent" the Valley for you in new and different ways in forthcoming issues.

—editor

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Letters

To the editor:

We have just had the pleasure of reading a copy of the winter issue of CURIO. As a former resident of Harrisonburg, there were many articles of interest, particularly about persons we know. Thanks for such an interesting magazine. We really like your photographs.

Mrs. Orrin M. Kline, Jr.
Manassas, Va.

Congratulations to the staff of CURIO. It is an impressive publication and does an excellent job of capturing some of the flavor of the Valley.

Paula Derelle Kearn
Harrisonburg

About the Cover:

Lorinda Palin’s landscape painting captures in oils the rural charm of the Shenandoah Valley. For more about the painter, her art, and two other area artists, please turn to page 56.

Photo staff:

GINO BELL, a JMU senior from Baltimore, Md., is double-majoring in geology and communication arts and planning a career in geology work or photography.

CHARLES FAZIO, from Yardley, Pa., is a sophomore majoring in communication arts and minoring in psychology and political science who plans a career in photojournalism.

BILL TARANGELO, a JMU graduate student in communication arts from Harrisonburg, Va., plans a career in photojournalism.
Harry F. Byrd, Jr.

Virginia's senior senator works in an informal setting that reflects his Valley ties

Article by Tricia Fischetti
Photography by Gino Bell

Although only about a two-and-a-half hour drive from Harrisonburg, the Richard Russell Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. seems a long way from the Shenandoah Valley.

At each entrance of the stately building, which is two blocks from the Capitol, uniformed guards greet visitors with an "open your bags, please" as they inspect belongings before allowing them to pass.

A glance at the building's directory is impressive, with the room numbers of such men as Vice President Walter Mondale and Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson alphabetically listed.

The halls are long and formal with a wide marble staircase and brass bannister dominating each floor. On the fourth floor, the doors are tall and dark and somewhat foreboding. But, on the door to suite 417 is the familiar Virginia state seal and the words "Mr. Byrd, Virginia, Welcome." And behind the door is a part of Virginia and a part of the Valley.

"I like an informal atmosphere to work in," says United States Sen. Harry F. Byrd, Jr.

His office reflects this philosophy—from its fireplace mantel lined with old and new Byrd family photographs, to the couch with throw pillows on which Byrd's wife needlepointed the United States and Virginia seals.

Another personal touch in the office is a plaque on the mantel, a gift from a friend's trip to China.

Inscribed on it is a saying by Chairman Mao: "Talks, speeches, articles and resolutions should all be concise and to the point. Meetings should also not go on too long."

"What do you think of a conservative senator with a saying by one of the most powerful Communist leaders of all time on his mantel?" Byrd quips with a ready smile.

A Virginia state senator for 18 years, Byrd was appointed to finish his father's U.S. Senate term in 1965 upon his retirement. He was elected to the remaining four years of the term in 1966 as a Democrat and was reelected in 1970 and 1976 as an Independent.

Byrd's soft-spoken personality belies the unapproachable image many have of political figures. His office in the Russell Building has a view of the Capitol, and while Congress is in session, Byrd enjoys the exercise of walking to and from his office many times a day. People often stop and talk with him on the way, he says. "But, that doesn't bother me; I like people."

While in Washington, Byrd and his wife, Gretchen, live in an apartment about 20 minutes from his office. About 70 miles away is their two-story brick home near Winchester, Va., built in 1949.

"If you take it on an average," Byrd says settling back in a chair beside his office fireplace, "I'm probably home once every three weeks." At home, when he has any free time, Byrd enjoys walking for pleasure. "I walk whenever I can to the Blue Ridge Mountains."

Byrd also enjoys working on his newspapers in his free time. The senator owns two weekly newspapers as well as the Winchester Evening Star and Harrisonburg Daily News-Record. "I enjoy working, not in the day-to-day operations, but in the overall context," he says.

The editorial policy at each newspaper is not determined by the senator. "The local people work that out at each paper," he says. "But both papers adhere to a general philosophy of what I would call a conservative but progressive approach to government."

His hands clasped before him, Byrd adds that he hopes his
newspapers follow standards of objectivity and fairness. "As a newspaper publisher, I've always felt the first obligation of a newspaper is to present the news objectively and in a comprehensive way—national and international, as well as local news."

Byrd's father, Harry F. Byrd, Sr., took over the Winchester Evening Star as a teenager when it was on the brink of bankruptcy. Byrd grew up with the newspaper business and entered it himself in 1935 and wrote a "one-man editorial page" for 25 years at the Winchester Evening Star.

The political life is something else Byrd grew up with. While his father was governor of Virginia, he attended John Marshall High School, a public high school in Richmond. He attended Virginia Military Institute from 1931-33 and the University of Richmond from 1933-35, where he majored in government.

Hazing at VMI was particularly rough for the young Byrd. "They all thought it was a great thing to take a broom and beat the son of the governor," he says, with the creases deepening around his eyes as he reminisces.

Throughout his career, the senator, now 65, has had to deal with the legacy of the Byrd name. From the days of his ancestor William Byrd of Westover; to his grandfather Richard Evelyn Byrd, a speaker of the House of Delegates; to his uncle Admiral Richard Byrd, the Arctic explorer; to his father, the famed U.S. senator and publisher, the Byrd name has been synonymous with Virginia.

"I don't give it a thought," Byrd says of the powerful Byrd name. "I've been exposed to politics all my life, and you sort of get used to it."

Sen. Byrd has somewhat of a reputation of being a private man. "I guess I'm private in the sense that I think everyone ought to have a little privacy," he says quietly.

But the senator is not private about his pride in his family. Photographs of his three children and nine grandchildren are on proud display in his office.

"I try to see my children as often as I can. They're busy and I'm busy, but we talk on the phone two or three times a week, and I see them on the average of once every two weeks."

About the possibility of his son Tom, who now is general manager of the Winchester Evening Star, being groomed for a later political career, Byrd says, "He's interested in government and politics. I'm not encouraging him to seek public office, but I'm not discouraging him either."

"It's a tough life, and I think it's important that an individual make his own decision if that's the type life he wants."
Other photographs displayed in the senator's Washington office are of his famous father. He considers him to be a major hero in his life. "I admired his political courage, his steadfastness to his convictions and the principles of government to which he adhered."

Sen. Byrd also admires Winston Churchill, whom he considers to be one of the great men of the 20th century. "His was an influence for good and for democracy," he says with conviction.

Historical figures that stand out in the senator's mind include Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. The conservative senator says he considers himself to be a Jeffersonian in philosophy.

Sen. Byrd's office is filled with family photographs and personal momentos. Above, he explains, "I see not a mushroom-type growth but a good, steady development in the Valley."
Although he spends much time in Washington, Sen. Byrd sees his personal ties as being strongly connected with the Shenandoah Valley, and he foresees a bright future of growth for the area. "I see not a mushroom type of growth, but a good, steady development in the Valley. The Valley is well diversified, and I think that's quite important."

"The problem with government finance is there is no political sex appeal in it, although it affects every man, woman and child in the nation."

Byrd has been disappointed with the recent trend of events in Washington of "more and more government, more and more spending and more and more government regulation." He sees this trend reversing itself, however.

"I think the public as a whole and more members of Congress are beginning to see that we can't solve all our problems just by passing more laws and spending more tax funds. To me, that's very encouraging."

Questioned about what he would like to leave as a legacy to Virginia, Byrd presses his forefinger to his temple in thought. "I would like to
see a permanent arrangement for a balanced federal budget. While that isn't essential for Virginia, it is essential for the nation, and of course, Virginia would benefit.”

Byrd believes he has achieved a part of this goal with his proposed legislation, but he would like to see it become lasting with a constitutional amendment.

Commenting on his personal goals, the senator glances thoughtfully to his left for a few moments. “I just want to do the best I can to justify the confidence the people of Virginia have entrusted in me.

“I feel a great deal of responsibility to the people of Virginia.”

The senator says he doesn't give a thought to the powerful Byrd name. “I've been exposed to politics all my life, and you sort of get used to it.”
Mountain lore:

Home remedies to cure what ails you

Old-timers advise that if an onion poultice won’t work, maybe a little pole cat grease will

Article by Kris Carlson
Photography by Charles A. Fazio
Sugar

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customs, legends of witchcraft, and
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one area of folklore that has gone
through a semi-revival, especially
among natural and health food
lovers, and that is the art of home
remedies.

"People are starting to turn back
ow to natural foods. Here we've
used natural foods for years," says
Mrs. Bowers, a 28-year resident of
Sugar Grove. "Every home had an
herb garden. Some still do. They used
to believe almost any disorder can be
cured by herbs."
The origins of the home remedies
go back to the area's German set-
tlers, who brought their "home
tactics" for medicine from the old
country in the 18th century. The last
era of widespread modern use was in
pre-World War II days, with most of
the home cures gradually dying out
by the late 1950s. Most cures were
handed down through generations by
word-of-mouth, or by actual practice.
In the old days, "The doctors were
a long way away, and money was
scarce," Mrs. Bowers says. "A lot of

the medicine was taken on faith, but
the same might be said of some of
today's."
Some of the cures, however, might
actually have had some value.
"They thought the poultices
worked. I'm not sure that they
don't," says Franklin's Dr. Luke
Eye, who has practiced medicine in
the area for over 20 years. At least it
kept them lying down and kept them
warm—that was the biggest ad-

vantag e, and it might still be ef-
ficent today. Anything that keeps
you quiet and warm and allows rest
has value. Other than that? They
liked them."
The biggest advocates of home
remedies, of course, are the folks
that used them.
Leafy Homan, a petite, white-
haired 80-year-old native of Sugar
Grove and resident of the Pendleton
Nursing Home, tells the story of the
time her husband got tonsillitis. The
doctor came out and diagnosed the
illness, but he couldn't seem to do
anything for it. So Leafy made an
onion poultice—by frying chopped
onions in a little bit of grease—and
then put them in a cloth on her
husband's chest. Leafy smiles as she
says that while the doctor didn't
agree the poultice helped, her
husband did get better.
Of all the home remedies, the
poultices were probably the most
popular and the most effective.
Besides onions, a mustard poultice
or plaster was also commonly used
for chest colds and pneumonia. Ida
Lannon, a 91-year-old native of
Buffalo Hills, which is just up the
road from her Pendleton Nursing
Home residence, gives instructions
on how to make a mustard poultice:
Take some flour and make a plaster
out of it, and then sprinkle ground
mustard seeds and hot water onto the
plaster and put it on the chest. If left
too long it will burn, warns the frail-
looking Ida, who is still quite an
enthusiast for home remedies.
"They're better than lots of the new
stuff," she insists.
Two other common poultices for

Located about 20 miles west of
Franklin is the secluded hillside town
of Sugar Grove, W.Va. Any of the 30
residents will tell you the area has
never really modernized, and now
due to soaring prices, "things are
going back to the old days."
"Twenty-five years ago everybody
burned wood for heat. Five years ago
people burned oil. Now almost
everyone is back to wood," 50-year-
old native John Bowers says. He and
his wife, Clinton Ann, own and run
the town's one-room combination
post office, antique and country dry

goods store.
In Sugar Grove, yesterday suffuses
the atmosphere like a slow leak from
an oxygen tank: it gives the hint of a
breath of purity and simplicity, but
from an ever-diminishing source that
must one day vanish. The source is
the town's elders—the septua-, octo-
and nonagenarians who are the only
remaining firsthand practitioners of
the lore of yesterday. A few are alive
and well; many can be found in
places like the Pendleton Nursing
Home in Franklin; and all of them
have stories to share.
The folklore of the Valley could fill
volumes, covering the origins of the
religious sects, old world holiday
customs, legends of witchcraft, and
native arts and crafts. But there is
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"They're better than lots of the new
stuff," she insists.
Two other common poultices for
colds were a mixture of either snuff and lard, which was supposed to be especially good for children, or a mixture of oil, liniment and turpentine. While some of these poultices sound like they would smell very badly, Ida scoffs at the suggestion. “They really didn’t smell bad at all, and if you were sick, your mother made you take your medicine whether you liked it or not,” she says. “And by the time you were an adult, you used the remedies without a second thought—just because they worked.”

One other poultice, used on boils and carbuncles, was a mixture of hot milk and bread. This was used to bring the infection to a head. For an infected cut, however, a mixture of the wild herb buttonweed and unsalted sheep tallow heated in a greased skillet was thought to be effective.

Herbs alone are another major category of home cures besides the poultices. Most of the herbs commonly used—horehound, bone set, catnip, peppermint, sassafras, and old man’s beard—still grow wild in the area today. Most were served as teas, perhaps with a little sugar, lard or whiskey to cure coughs, fevers or colds.

While the herbal teas probably had little value alone, when combined with keeping the patient quiet and warm in bed, they at least could do little harm.

However this can’t be said for all the home remedies taken internally. In fact, the cures involving kerosene and turpentine were probably more dangerous than the illnesses they were treating.

A spoonful of kerosene and sugar was often given to fight asthma or the croup—the idea being to make the person vomit and “get all the phlegm up” so he would get well quicker.

Another rather dangerous recipe was pole cat grease (the fat of a skunk), mixed with a couple drops of whiskey. Like the kerosene cure, it was taken to make the patient regurgitate to aide in pneumonia cases.

Along with these internal concoctions and the poultices, a third...
The old-timers don't all agree on the benefits of the home remedies—some swear by them, while others say they were 'just bunk.'

Category of home remedies is the miscellaneous practical cures, which include:
- drinking a lemon and honey mixture for hoarseness;
- taking a teaspoon to tablespoon of salts for constipation, and eating canned blueberries to cure diarrhea;
- using butter for burns since ice would "drive the burn in";
- drinking plenty of ginger ale for a "sick stomach";
- and, for a toothache, either "pulling it out," putting some heat on it, or drinking lemon-cinnamon tea.

There are some practical cures to combat snakebites, but a doctor should still be called in these cases. Another Pendleton resident, 89-year-old Jane Eye, recalls the time a friend of hers was outside gathering potatoes for dinner, when she was bitten on the foot by a copperhead snake. The lady rushed to her garden, grabbed a few onions, crushed them and put them on the bite. After awhile, the onions turned green by drawing the poison out.

Later a doctor gave her some medicine. She still got pretty sick, "but it could have been a lot worse," Jane maintains.

Another story is that of a man who was rounding up his turkeys when he was bitten on the foot by a rat-tlesnake. His life was saved, the tale goes, because he was wet, drank strong coffee, and put turpentine on the bite. Being wet kept the fever down, the coffee kept the blood strong, and the turpentine drew out the poison.

Another aide for snakebites is drinking a pint of whiskey. "It doesn't help, but you feel better," one old-timer quips.

A last category of home remedies is that of superstitions—which no one believes are effective anymore.

There are several "recipes" or poetical incantations for various illnesses and diseases. The originals were usually written down in broken Dutch or crude German. The following, when chanted repeatedly, serves as a recipe against thrush, a disease commonly found in children, caused by a fungus and characterized by milky-white lesions on the mouth, lips, and throat:

"Job, Job went across the Land, he has a staff in His hand. There came God the Lord. God, the Lord Spoke: 'Job, Job, why are You so sad, Job?' Job Spoke: 'Lord, why should I not be sad? The tongue and the mouth of my child are wasting away.' In the name...."

This particular recipe was discovered in an old memorandum book in Sugar Grove in 1967.

And finally, for high blood pressure, thought to be caused by having too much blood or by "impurities" in the blood, a small instrument called a bleeder was used to relieve or "let" the blood. The bleeder, about two inches long, was made of a sharp blade that was cocked and held against the skin, usually on the wrist, and then triggered to open a small puncture to let the blood. Leafy Homan recalls that bleeder were usually administered by doctors.

While old-timers don't all agree on the effectiveness of the old remedies, with some swearing by them and others saying they were "just bunk," most do prefer the convenience of the modern medicines and technology over the old. Yet they still aren't all convinced modern methods work either.

Whether the old remedies worked or not, all the superstitions, herbal mixtures and poultices are important for the cultural heritage and tradition they connote. And, when the last of the old-timers who can talk about them first hand are gone, they will be among the few remaining links to the past, even in communities like Sugar Grove.
Swannanoa:
An Afton Mountain Palace

Article by Donna Sizemore
Photography by Charles A. Fazio
In a heavenly paradise on the edge of Afton Mountain, Swannanoa combines the romance of yesterday with a philosophy for living tomorrow.

The marble palace is an exact replica of the Medici castle in Florence, Italy. Swannanoa’s mystique lies not only in its picturesque and stately appearance, but in its owners, the late Walter Russell, a renowned author, artist and philosopher, and his widow Lao, its present proprietress.

Swannanoa was built in 1912 by a railroad tycoon, Major James Dooley, as a summer home for his wife. The Russells visited the abandoned estate while on their honeymoon.

The palace was in ruins with dead rats and snakes covering dirt floors. On a cold, damp November afternoon in 1948, the couple began renovations, and by the following spring, the bottom floor of the palace opened to the public just as it appears today.

The Russells bought Swannanoa to establish a special university, designed to spread a message of love. It is a living replica of the knowledge offered by the University of Science and Philosophy, founded by the Russells and incorporated under the name of The Walter Russell Foundation. The couple prepared courses designed to encourage students to get to know themselves spiritually.

Unlike most universities, Swannanoa has no resident student body, although students are welcome to visit the palace at any time. Instruction from the university is conducted entirely by home study.

Under “The Russells’ Home Study Course in Universal Law, Natural Science and Living Philosophy,” students are sent a series of 48 lessons to their homes. Completion of the course costs from $150 to $180, which goes toward upkeep of Swannanoa, the university and staff salaries.

Students are obtained by word-of-mouth and several books written by the Russells. “People come to see me from all over the world,” says Lao. “Something within draws them.”

Swannanoa does possess a hidden appeal. It not only attracts students to its university, but each year, thousands of tourists visit the estate.

While driving up the winding road to reach the palace, a sense of calmness fills Swannanoa’s visitors. At first glimpse, the palace appears magical, towering through the trees and shrubs. However, a closer look reveals it to be more sacred than magical.

Bronze angels cover the door, an indication of the emphasis placed on Christianity throughout the estate. Inside, an Italian Cararra fireplace of red and white marble dominates the handcrafted walls and carved ceilings, which give Swannanoa an elegant beauty. Today it would cost $20 million to build the estate.

Throughout the palace and
Swannanoa's hostess, Margaret, reads one of Lao Russell's books beside the fireplace.
grounds, the beauty of Walter Russell's sculpture and paintings makes Swannanoa a true museum for art lovers. Although the estate contains only two percent of Russell's work, an art lover would be awed at his masterpieces. From "The Might of the Ages," Walter's most well-known painting, to the marble stairway with an original Tiffany stained glass window, to Lao's luxurious living quarters, beauty abounds at Swannanoa.

It is a sacred beauty, however, with busts of Christ throughout the palace. "The Christ of the Blue Ridge," a towering sculpture by the Russells, flanks the tiered gardens behind the palace overlooking the Rockfish and Shenandoah Valleys.

But the beauty of Swannanoa is still only one part of its spirit. "You really have to visit it to catch the spirit of it," says Margaret, Swannanoa's strawberry-haired hostess, who was a student of the university before coming to Swannanoa to live. Margaret, 23, like most other people who meet Lao Russell, was captivated by her charm.

Lao speaks in a soft but enthusiastic tone, as her eyes sparkle and radiate a zest for life. "Whatever you give to life, life gives back to you," she says, explaining that the trouble with the world is that it is a taking world and not a giving world.

Lao's soft and cozy living quarters reflect her personality. Pastels are a favorite, coloring much of her everyday decor. Walter, who is listed in "Who's Who in America," "Who's Who in America," "Who's Who in the World," glides through the quarters pointing out special details, making a stranger feel warmly at home.

Swannanoa is open daily and admission to the palace and gardens is 50 cents for children and one dollar for adults. The estate is located four miles east of Waynesboro, at the junction of Skyline Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway.

From the special detail given to every part of the palace, to the wholehearted hugs given to visitors as they leave, the "legacy of Afton Mountain" is an unforgettable adventure.

DONNA SIZEMORE, from Skipwith, Va., is a JMU junior majoring in communication arts who plans a public relations or magazine career.

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Edd Michael Surprises Himself

With a $5 fiddle and a fifty-cent lesson, the Rockingham County native began a musical career that led to his winning the Virginia State Fiddle Championship.

Article by Vance Richardson
Photography by Gino Bell
Edd Michael was just eight years old when his father ordered him a $5 fiddle from Montgomery Ward.

“Daddy knew I was musically inclined,” he recalls, “because I could pick a tune on an old mandolin that was around the house.”

Michael remembers striking up a tune the first time he picked up his new fiddle, although he admits it was “a crude tune, and not very good.”

Whenever he wasn’t busy with his farm chores, the young boy would practice fiddling tunes he’d heard on the radio. “I’d hear a tune and I’d keep on trying until I got it right.”

Though he only received one hour-long fiddle lesson costing 50 cents while in grade school, Michael’s relentless practice and his love of music paid off. Today—nearly half a century after picking up a fiddle—the 54-year-old Rockingham County resident holds the coveted title of Virginia State Fiddle Champion.

At home the state champ gathers with a few friends to practice a little country music picking. His eyes are fixed on his fiddle as his bow moves up and down the strings—at times slowly, at times rapidly, but always with gentle ease. He glances up only occasionally at the spectators in the room. His attention on his fiddling is more out of habit than necessity, for Michael could fiddle blindfolded with no problem at all. At times he cocks his head and gazes away from his bow, staring at nothing in particular. He stands still, feet firmly planted, body straight, head tilted with chin resting on the leather pad at the base of the fiddle.

The fast tempo of the bluegrass tune elicits smiles, tapping of feet and clapping of hands from those listening to the spirited music. Michael’s fingers dance on his fiddle strings as his thumb steadies his hand on the instrument.

“Concentration is the name of the game,” he says, “I don’t care what it is—sports, business or music—concentration is the key to anything.”

Michael looks serious as he concentrates on his playing—never glum, but always serious.

Playing publicly for the first time while still in grade school, Michael went on to play his first square dance at 16, and soon his musical talents were in high demand.

“We used to go around to play at neighbors’ houses when there was either live music or no music at all,” he says. In addition to playing for small parties, Michael also fiddled at barn dances in downtown Harrisonburg’s Assembly Hall. “They’d call it a barn dance, but actually it wasn’t a dance at all. We just played music and people sat around and listened.”

One hour of the barn dance was broadcast live each week on radio station WSVA, which at the time was located at East Market and Main streets in Harrisonburg.

Two years after marrying his wife Lorraine in 1947, Michael began playing fiddle for Bob Dean, a local favorite. They formed a band called Lorraine in 1947, Michael began playing fiddle for Bob Dean, a local favorite. They formed a band called...
the Southern Serenaders, and for 10 years played all over the Shenandoah Valley. Radio stations such as WINA in Charlottesville, WSIG in Mount Jackson, WAFC in Staunton, WSVA in Harrisonburg, and WAYB in Waynesboro, broadcast the country melodies of the Southern Serenaders.

Then in the late '50s Michael formed his own band simply called Edd Michael and the Boys. He later fiddled throughout Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland with Bill Bailey and the Skyline Boys.

Though he had many an opportunity to go full-time professional, Michael and his wife preferred the quiet of the farm to the hustle and bustle of life on the road. Both are quick to point out their disdain for the lifestyle of the big country music stars, or, for that matter, anyone in the public eye.

“I really think he could have made it in Nashville if he'd wanted to,” Lorraine says quietly while her husband's out of the room, “but he loves the farm too much to leave it. We've had enough exposure over the years to know that we don't want to be celebrities.”

Michael's fiddle playing may not have made him a big celebrity, but it did earn him a little spending money. “It was a good part-time job. I paid the grocery bills,” he acknowledges, “but it's hard to make money playing music. I guess it's kind of like art—there's not much to it as far as being practical.”

Michael showed no interest in entering fiddle competitions as recently as a year ago, even though

“I really think he could have made it in Nashville, but he loves the farm too much to leave it.”

Lorraine often encouraged him to do so. “I had very little hope of winning, so I never bothered,” he explains.

But last September he decided to enter the East Coast Music Contest where he took third place. With his new-found confidence, Michael decided to compete for the Virginia State Championship at Chase City, and much to his surprise, he took home the first place trophy and the $50 prize. He followed that win a month later by beating out 38 contestants to win first-place fiddle in the master's division of the Pennsylvania State Championship.

Michael continues to play his fiddle regularly, performing mostly on weekends with his new band, the Valley Express. He attributes much of his success to talented back-up guitarists such as Spike Stroup of Harrisonburg and Richard Propst of Craigsville.

This June Michael will travel to Nashville, where by special invitation he'll compete against 100 of the best fiddlers in America.

Michael expresses subdued optimism on his chances in Nashville. “It would be nice to finish in the top 20, but you never know what could happen.” He pauses and grins. “Lightning could strike twice.”

VANCE RICHARDSON, a JMU senior from Richmond, Va., with a double major in communication arts and political science, plans a writing career.
Eckhard Thalwitz, shown here with bartender Kenny Waxman, has studied under some of Europe's greatest master chefs.

The Bavarian Chef

Old World hospitality flourishes in rural Virginia

Article by Mark Sutton

Photography by Charles A. Fazio
The Bavarian Chef is one of few restaurants today that may truly be described as unique, bringing Old World traditions and atmosphere to rural Virginia.

Frankly, it's an idea that shouldn't have worked.

To transplant an outstanding European chef, one who had cooked for such people as the former Shah of Iran and King Mohammed V of Morocco, to an American farming community, seems absurd, especially when most chefs can command impressive salaries in metropolitan areas. Yet, in 1974, Eckhard Thalwitz—a man who had studied under some of Europe's greatest chefs—moved to Madison County, renovated an old, run-down truck stop, and opened a restaurant.

Thalwitz' reputation preceded him, and the opening of the Bavarian Chef received coverage in Richmond, Charlottesville and Washington, D.C. newspapers.

Thalwitz and his wife, Bruni, came to the United States from their native Germany in 1961. The honeymooning couple liked what they saw and decided to stay. They then began the search that would culminate in the purchase of the "29er"—a truck stop on Route 29 south.

Thalwitz almost completely remodeled the building, replacing plastic table tops and plastic curtains with wooden tables and paneling. In 1976, the upstairs was remodeled and christened "The Fondue Pot." A low-beamed ceiling caps booths of wood with moveable cushions. Plush carpeting completes the atmosphere of comfort and conviviality. A portion of the downstairs dining area has been remodeled in the same style, and a bar and foyer have also been added.

Today, the Bavarian Chef, open Wednesday through Sunday, stresses a friendly, home-like atmosphere, excellent food and courteous service. The menu consists almost exclusively of German dishes, but Thalwitz usually serves a French dish as his daily special. A popular dish is Wiener schnitzel, two breaded veal cutlets in brown gravy. Side dishes include spaetzle—a German egg noodle—Belgium carrots and peas Parisienne. Thalwitz hopes to add more French cuisine to the menu, since it is his speciality.

The menu does not contain descriptions of the dishes, so the waitresses have to explain them to their customers. "The waitress is selling the food," Thalwitz says, "so she should let the customer know about it." Even more importantly, he says, it gives the waitress and customer better contact with each other.

Thalwitz has always been interested in giving the customer what he wants. In response to persistent requests for Italian cuisine, he opened another restaurant, the Casa Napoli, north of the Bavarian Chef on Route 29. Thalwitz originally alternated days between the two locations, but he sold Casa Napoli a few years ago because he felt he could not properly supervise both restaurants at once.

Now, Thalwitz can devote all of his time to the Bavarian Chef. 'As long as I can cook it all myself, I'm happy. Here is where I want to be.'
talents to the Bavarian Chef. He cooks every meal himself, even though some 550 people may dine there on a busy night.

A large man with deft hands, wearing the white linen jacket associated with a master chef, Thalwitz swiftly yet meticulously goes about the business of cooking. He believes a good chef never stops learning.

Assistants may do the preparation for the dishes, but the final product is always his. "It's a great method of quality control," Thalwitz says. It also allows him to keep production on a small scale.

Further expansion for the Bavarian Chef is not foreseen. Thalwitz thinks the current capacity of the restaurant is just about right. "Here is where I want to be," he says. "As long as I can cook it all myself, I'm happy."

Despite what seems to be a less-than-ideal location and only word-of-mouth advertising, the Bavarian Chef is booked every weekend, and many weeknights as well.

Tables are reserved for two hour intervals. Customers do not come in, wolf down food, and run out of the Bavarian Chef. Thalwitz believes a meal should be a relaxing, enjoyable occasion. Therefore, one should expect to spend about 45 minutes soaking up the restaurant's atmosphere before the meal comes to the table.

That meal would be much easier to bring to the table if it were in a metropolitan area, Thalwitz says. But he does try to get as much of his food as possible from local suppliers, since he believes a local business should benefit the local economy. Thalwitz also believes in the concept of the family business; both he and his wife are heavily involved in the operation of the restaurant. They have a son attending a private high school in Madison County.

A meal at the Bavarian Chef is something to be experienced. Reservations, Thalwitz' "biggest headache," should be made a week in advance.

MARK SUTTON, who plans a career in magazine work or public relations, is a JMU junior majoring in communication arts.
Home Computers

With three local dealerships, a new 'toy' comes to Harrisonburg

Article by David Ricks
Photography by Gino Bell

The man steps out of the Jaguar, smooths his dark blue suit and walks in. Outside, he is a junior bank official, but inside he is a kid in a toy store. "Unbelievable, that's great," he says as he draws flowers that look like something a six-year-old brings home to tape on the refrigerator door. The difference is that this masterpiece is being drawn on an $800 graphics tablet that will be added to a home computer system.

Doug Reilly, a 13-year-old Thomas Harrison Junior High School student in Harrisonburg, recently bought a $600 Interact system with money saved from two summers of mowing lawns and three months of delivering papers. "I'm interested in science fiction and that led to buying a computer."

Another new computer owner is Terry Slaubaugh, a math professor at Blue Ridge Community College, who bought a OSI 4P. Slaubaugh, who looked at microcomputers for about a year before buying, uses his computer for business and educational purposes. "I have two sons in high school and I feel that it is important that they become literate in computers," he says. Slaubaugh wrote a program to determine whether it would be economical to buy a new car and found that gas would have to go up to $1.75 a gallon to save him
money.

While home computer systems aren't a new phenomenon, they are a growing business. Recently, Harrisonburg gained two new microcomputer distributors—Computer Works Inc. and Valley Microcomputer Services, joining Radio Shack as area distributors.

The reason for the growth of the microcomputer industry is that advances in technology have brought the cost of the most basic systems down to $500. However, even with these advances, some distributors have seen price increases. According to Harold Brubaker of Valley Microcomputer Services Inc., inflation is rising faster than technology.

The uses of the home microcomputer include financial management, education, home security and computer games. Jack Kammerer of Computer Works estimates that one out of three are bought for their educational value to children. "That is just as good a reason as any for buying a personal computer," he says.

A microcomputer can store programs, but generally has less memory and a smaller word size than the larger machines. Most look like a typewriter, with a video screen replacing the paper carriage.

Home computers can be hooked in with smoke detectors and burglar alarms and programmed to call fire and police departments with recorded messages for emergencies.

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Learning to use a computer has to be a lot more educational than television

Computer game programs include football, space invader, chess and backgammon. Larry Heatwole, owner of Computer Works, thinks that even while a child is playing games, he is learning to use the computer. "It has to be a lot more educational than sitting in front of the television," Heatwole says.

One of the major selling points of microcomputers is the game programs, for which lower-priced models will suffice. These models, limited in memory capacity, cost about $500.

According to Brubaker, three major factors which determine the price and quality of a system are memory, expandability and speed.

Memory is the backbone of any microcomputer system, with its size determining the limitations of the system. Memory is measured in units of K, with 4K being the smallest amount of memory found in area distributors. 4K memory will store almost 4,000 letters permanently. This number may sound large, but a memory of this size could only contain the text of this magazine article. More memory is needed to write and store programs.

Larger memory capacity, however, will cost more. For

Doug Reilly plays computer chess with the system he bought with summer savings.
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example, the Apple II computer system with 16K memory costs $1,195, and the same system with 32K memory costs $1,345.

Expandability is important, according to Kammerer, because “data processing grows on you.” As an owner’s knowledge grows, he may want to add to his system, making an expandable system necessary. Speed is also important since processing information quickly is a major reason for buying a home computer.

Matching the system to the individual is the objective of the local distributors. According to Kammerer, a sale is a long-term process. “We are finding ourselves being both educators and salespeople.” He says a person often looks for a system for months, learning more and more about it before making the investment.

While sales are not quite up to what some distributors would like, Kammerer thinks that in a year or two the area will be more receptive to home computers. “Some people need the extra justification that it can be tied into more jobs, not just accounting and marketing,” Kammerer says. A microcomputer is a problem-solving tool that can be used in many jobs. “In the Harrisonburg area, people are beginning to realize that this is an affordable and usable option to them,” he says.

There doesn’t seem to be a distinct type of person that buys a microcomputer, according to Kammerer. One purchaser is the Rockingham County school system which bought an Apple II Plus to be shared within the schools. Kammerer hopes that it will give some young people enough confidence to buy a system themselves.

Kammerer says that some people come into Computer Works with this “help me, I’m interested, but I’m afraid” look on their faces. But all area distributors have salespeople who are glad to explain and demonstrate the systems. Or perhaps Heatwole’s three-year-old son Benjamin, who often plays with the display computers at Computer Works, can demonstrate how easy they are to operate.

DAVID RICKS, from Virginia Beach, Va., is a JMU senior with a communication arts major. He plans a career in business.
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Walt Morgan:
‘Bringing back a piece of the Valley’

Article by Dennis Smith

An old refrigerator is stocked with macaroni and cheese, egg nog mix, and camera film. One sink, which serves as a film developer, is filled with canisters. The other, standing where a washer and dryer once were, has four tubs holding printing chemicals.

A tiny desk contains a sparse selection of pencils and paper. A white wooden shelf that once held canned foods, now is packed with box after box of film.

This darkroom hardly compares to those of major metropolitan newspapers, yet it reflects the easy-going personality of its occupant, award-winning photographer Walt Morgan of Woodstock’s Shenandoah Valley-Herald.

“It’s just what I need to do my job,” says Morgan, the one-man photography staff of the Valley-Herald. “I like it because everything is just where it should be. I don’t need anything more.”

More than 75 of Morgan’s award-winning photos have emerged from this former kitchen in the past six years. The awards include the 1978 and 1974 top news photographs in Virginia, numerous honors from local competitions and the 1972 News Photographers’ Best Photo on the Virginia Associated Press wire.

The 27-year-old Morgan is the oldest of three brothers from Woodstock to graduate from James Madison University and take newspaper positions in the Valley. His brother Bob is the sports editor of the Daily News-Record in Harrisonburg, and Jimmy is the assistant managing editor of the Page News and Courier in Luray.

“It’s funny. We all made decisions on our own to go into newspaper work,” Morgan says. “I started out writing just like my brothers did, but I liked taking photos better. I wrote high school football articles for the Valley-Herald while I was in high school. One day they asked me to take shots of the games.

“I used one of my dad’s old cameras, and that was the first time I ever touched a camera. It was trial and error for a little while. It took some time for me to pick up the technical aspects of the camera. But, now the camera seems to be an extension of my eye.”

In his eight years as a photographer, Morgan estimates he has taken about 250,000 shots of life in the Shenandoah Valley. “I’ve seen parts of the Valley that very few people have, and I try to bring a little piece of each place back to the viewers through my camera,” he says. “I grew up in Waynesboro until the fourth grade and then Woodstock. I know life in the Valley, and I love to record what goes on here. The people of the Valley are its heart—that’s why I take shots of the people.”

As a photographer, Morgan is a humanist. He holds a special fondness for people, particularly children. His photographs tell the story of what it’s like to live and grow up in the Valley.

“Children are so easy to shoot because they do everything naturally, and they also bring to mind images of our childhood we all can understand. Sometimes when I need to get a feature shot, I just sit in a spot that I think kids will be playing near, and I come up with some of my best shots.”

Morgan has achieved a reputation as one of the finest photographers in Virginia, and has received job offers from several metropolitan newspapers. But he plans to stay in the Valley for some time.

“The Valley is a photographer’s heaven. There’s so many things to shoot, that you can never run out of subjects. I guess I like living here because I grew up here, and I love this place and its people. The Valley is home to me.”

DENNIS SMITH, a JMU senior from Arlington, Va. majoring in communication arts, plans a career in public relations.

Morgan (below) caught the lady (opposite) after a heated battle. It seems a construction company built a road through her newly-planted flower bed.
Distance runners from two rival Shenandoah County schools experience the emotional highs and lows of winning and losing. Older men (following pages) relax at a Valley reservation for the homeless. A horse exercises on a farm near Edinburg, and a little girl experiences the first snow of the year in one of Morgan's many award-winning shots.
Rebirth of the Log Cabin

Nostalgia and practical living appeal to homeowners

Articles by Theresa Beale

The house built out of necessity by the Shenandoah Valley's first settlers has become the fancy of contemporary homeowners.

The log cabin is back. Whether homebuyers are restoring century-old houses or buying prefabricated log home kits, Americans' infatuation with the log cabin has turned into a rewarding hobby for cabin restorers and a growing business for the some 200 log home manufacturers in the United States.

Logs were a natural building resource for the Germans and Scotch-Irish who left Pennsylvania after 1730 to settle in Virginia. Using an axe as the primary tool, a man could shelter his family with nature's best insulator—wood. With today's soaring energy costs, homeowners are returning to the building wisdom of their ancestors. A log cabin can be easily heated with one strategically placed woodstove.

But energy efficiency isn't the only
appeal of the log cabin, according to Bernie Weisgerber, a local logger who is an expert on Valley log structures.

"Americans have a love affair with log cabins," Weisgerber says. A feeling of nostalgia exists in a log cabin, whether it was handbuilt years ago or recently cut in a sawmill. But Weisgerber's interest goes to the root of log cabins—the early American tools used to build the country's first homes.

At 34, Weisgerber is a strapping man with auburn beard and hair, graying at the temples. Sitting back in a rocking chair in his Cross Keys home, he recalls that he became interested in his hobby as a child when his father gave him the old family tools.

"Old tools hold a fascination for men," Weisgerber says with a chuckle. "My wife says the only difference between men and boys is the price of their toys."

Weisgerber followed his grandfather's footsteps by opening a cabinet shop. Then he drifted into woodcrafting, becoming part-owner of a logging business in Boulder, Colo.

Last fall Weisgerber moved his business to Harrisonburg and resumed his hobby by teaching a course at James Madison University on the use of early American tools. He uses his extensive collection of hand-made tools to demonstrate how to do everything from felling trees to making shingles.

All tool handles were handmade in earlier days, Weisgerber says, and depending upon the age of the tool, the metal was handwrought. The basic tool used in log cabin building was the broadaxe, which had an oversized chiseled blade and a bent handle to prevent the housewright, a professional builder, from skinning his knuckles as he hewed a log.

Hand-hewing a log was a tedious process for the pioneer builder, but living in a hand-hewn cabin carried social significance because of the work involved, Weisgerber says. After felling the tree, the housewright made two chalk lines by twanging a string down the length of the log. He then scored the log at two- to-three-inch intervals with a felling axe. Using the broadaxe, the housewright then sliced bark chips. After both sides were hewn, the log was turned and the two-hour process repeated.

"History books give you the impression that the neighbors got together and cut down the trees and built the house in one day and had a party that night," Weisgerber says. Months of hewing and notching logs were involved before the legendary houseraising parties were held.

Although the early settlers hand-hewed their logs, developing technology reduced some of the handwork involved in building a cabin. Nails, for instance, went through an evolution of being hand-forged to machine-cut to factory-made. In fact, the age of a cabin may be indicated by its nails. Different sawing methods also indicate the period in which a cabin was constructed, Weisgerber says.

Modern techniques first appeared in the Valley, while older methods remained in the mountain hollows. Log cabin building died out in the Valley between the Civil War and 1900, but continued in the hollows until 1930. With the innovation of prefabricated kits, log cabins have experienced a resurgence in the area.

But the Valley's original log cabins, with their solid construction and hardy wood, have survived the years. The hardwood logs of chestnut are the last of their type, since a blight killed all chestnut trees by the 1930s. Oak is the second most durable wood used in Valley cabins, with pine also common. With the right wood and building techniques, a log cabin can last for more than 200 years, Weisgerber says.

Homebuilders who prefer the rusticity of the past may find one of the Valley's several log cabins built by the first settlers. The best way to locate an original cabin is by word-of-mouth, Weisgerber says.

"If you know a lot of local people, they can tell you where they are," he says. "But if you want a log cabin, the best and easiest way is to buy some land and a kit."

Both options are open to residents of the Shenandoah Valley. Two Elkton residents have restored 18th century log cabins, and several distributors in the area offer the ease of building a modern log home. In the following articles, the rebirth of the log home will be featured in both its new and old aspects.
Pioneer Living

It's back to basics in a 186-year-old cabin

Roughing it doesn't end with the steep climb for H.C. and Alice Hisey when they visit their log cabin retreat atop Elkton's Dean Mountain.

Modern conveniences are still in the future for this 186-year-old rustic home, which boasts a fireplace for warmth and a woodstove for cooking. Oil lamps illuminate the rough oak beams running the length of the ceiling to the stone wall foundation. From the rafters, hang remnants of the past—string beans called "leather breeches" strung in the air to dry.

Rewards from the Hiseys' frequent hunting trips adorn the cabin: tailfeathers from grouse and wild turkey are pinned on interior walls and outside the back door, several squirrel tails flap in the wind. A couple pairs of turkey feet hang near the stone fireplace in the basement. "This is what the environment calls for," says Hisey, a state agriculture department employee, as he stirs the coals on the hearth. "We just wanted a place to escape to."

Although the hike up to the cabin takes about an hour, the weekend refuge is only five miles from the Hiseys' home on an old mink farm in Elkton.

The old cabin was on the 400 acres of mountainous land the Hiseys purchased in 1966. After 30 years of vacancy, they never thought it could be inhabited.

"One more windstorm and it would have been a heap on the side of the mountain," recalls Hisey. The cabin had a deteriorating stone foundation and a roof shot full of holes by hunters who had chased prey inside the deserted structure. Weathered boards covered all four walls in place of windows and doors.

"We were going to tear it down, but some friends told us we should restore it," Hisey says. Since the original oak logs had been protected by the weathered boards, the foundation was the main target for restoration.
Four stonemasons and their helpers rebuilt it, using its original stone and replacing the old mortar with hand-mixed cement since trucks couldn't make it up the rugged mountain road. A railroad jack was used to prop up one side of the sagging cabin as the men worked.

Some wood had to be refinished, such as the oak and chestnut logs on the cabin's front and back, which were preserved with turpentine and linseed oil.

However, cleaning the inside logs was a bigger job. Previous occupants had plastered layers of newspapers, magazines and whitewash over the hand-hewn logs to block the wind that entered through the clay between the logs.

But modern technology ends with the benefits of concrete in this cabin; electricity and plumbing are conveniences reserved for the Hiseys'

Walking sticks are essential when H.C. and Alice Hisey make frequent hikes to their mountain cabin (left.) Hisey (right) examines historic relics the couple have uncovered with a metal detector.

Elkton home. A mountain spring, fenced to keep out animals, serves as the only water supply. Light is provided by open windows, the fireplace or oil lamps. And a telephone, radio or television are unheard of in this territory.

The natural beauty of the woods surrounding the Hiseys' cabin provides pleasure for the couple as they walk through nearby Shenandoah National Park, or as they research the history of their log home.

The cabin is believed to have been built about 1794 after the land was patented to John Stanley. Hisey has seen the original deed signed by Henry Lee, governor of Virginia and father of Robert E. Lee. Former occupants of the Hiseys' cabin recall growing up in the house. When the couple invited members of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society to visit the cabin last summer, the guest list included a 92-year-old man who grew up there with his 11 brothers and sisters.

Artifacts from the past—such as hand-forged nails, horseshoes, old farm tools and pottery pieces—have turned up as the Hiseys scan the area with a metal detector.

The Hiseys' cabin carries on an almost 200-year tradition on Dean Mountain, and as long as the couple can climb up the mountain with their walking sticks, that rustic pioneer living will endure in the Valley.

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(703) 867-9904 or 867-5141
The only thing attractive about the small frame house Daniel and Renee Garber bought last summer was its $15,000 price tag.

But the erratic window sizes of the house, which is located at the foot of Elkton’s Dean Mountain, tipped Garber off that a log cabin may be hiding underneath the layers of asphalt, fake brick, tarpaper and boards covering the house from its stone foundation to its tin roof.

When Garber and his father removed the weathered coverings, they did find a sturdy white oak log cabin underneath. And after five months of restoring the old cabin at an additional $15,000, Garber and his wife moved in with their two small children and Siberian Husky.

Early settlers in the Valley boarded their log cabins for better insulation, says Garber, who works at Kroger supermarket and as a minister at the Assembly of Christ Church in Harrisonburg. “We’ve also found that at a certain point in American history, it was a sign of poverty to live in a log cabin. They perked their cabins up with siding.”

In this era, when most original log cabins have deteriorated, living in one of the Valley’s first log cabins is a delight for owners like the Garbers who restore the structures. Garber even uncovered a few clues to the cabin’s history as it was restored for contemporary living.

“We had torn off all the boards on the cabin and flopped them on the other side of the fence. We were getting ready to use one board when we noticed ‘SLH’ and ‘1893’ engraved in the wood,” he says. With research, Garber discovered that Steven Hensley bought the house in 1892 and probably boarded it up one year later, since the engravings faced the logs.

Although the Garbers aren’t sure when their cabin was built, the land deed dates to 1841. Houses often were not mentioned on deeds then, but local people have shown the couple...
Earlier occupants covered the cabin with boards, tarpaper and asphalt material. Maps from the 1700s that indicate the cabin was on the property. To preserve the cabin's historical nature, few changes have been made aside from sandblasting the large hand-hewn oak logs to remove animal droppings accumulated during the many years the cabin was uninhabited. Garber's father rebuilt the living room's stone chimney, and Garber occupied himself with cleaning out the remains of mud and wood between the logs and rechinking them.

First, he put six inches of insulation between the logs. Nails were staggered every two inches on the top and bottom logs to secure the chinking. A mixture of white sand and cement was plastered on each side of the insulation to complete it.

The Garbers had to adapt their cabin to modern living. The 5'11” doorways, for instance, had to be raised. A brick chimney was added in the living room to accommodate the woodstove, the cabin's sole heat source. Bathroom facilities were installed, along with other common conveniences—electricity, plumbing and a gas stove. But a mountain spring is tapped for the couple's water supply, and surrounding woods provide fuel for the woodstove.

Although the Garbers have lived in their cabin since November, they say they have “many years yet” to finish the home. They may add carpet for warmth, and the tin roof still has to be finished. Stonework needs to be completed on the main chimney and adjoining summer kitchen.

But Garber says he isn't in a hurry. Just like their predecessors, the couple intends to make the relic their home.

"The last time I built a house, I finished before we moved in," Garber says. "I was bored."
Wilderness in a Kit

Prefabricated log homes offer energy efficiency and carefree maintenance in a rustic setting

“They’re building log houses again in the Shenandoah Valley,” announced a local television reporter seven years ago when a local log home distributor opened its business.

Not since the turn of the century had log cabins returned to the Valley where modern construction techniques had taken over the homebuilding industry. But in the past decade—an era of back-to-nature trends and energy conservation efforts—new homebuilders have gone back to the log construction of their ancestors.

Log homes are energy-efficient—one woodstove can heat an entire home. Wood has an insulation factor ten times greater per inch than brick, and maintenance is minimal. Cedar logs need no upkeep, while the bottom logs of pine homes may be sprayed every three to five years with insect repellent.

But underlying these reasons for building a log home is a common thread—an infatuation with the log cabin.

“It’s amazing how many people have said they’ve dreamed of living in a log home since they were children,” says Willi Burke who, along with her husband, Barney, operates a Boyne Falls Log Homes distributorship in New Market. They have sold more than 100 homes in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. Today’s log homes, however, are different from the rustic cabins of the Valley’s first settlers. Now, they are manufactured in plants across the country in a variety of styles, with designs including cathedral ceilings, basements and sun decks.

Prices of modern log cabin kits range from $7,000 for a pine home to $50,000 for a cedar home. The owner can expect to pay anywhere from two-to-five times that price to complete the house.

“The sky’s the limit as to how much you can put into it,” says P.L. Kyger, a local distributor of Real Log Homes. In Kyger’s pine home kits, all logs, insulation and three blueprints are included, as well as four hours of technical site assistance. The owner purchases his own foundation, flooring, roofing and utilities.

Large main rooms are a popular trend in modern log homes, say Barney and Willi Burke, who exhibit a model cedar log home in New Market.
"If the owner does a lot of the work himself, and does his own contracting, he can expect to spend about three-and-a-half times the package price. If he has a contractor build the house, he can spend about five-and-a-half times the price," Kyger says.

The natural insulation, durability and ease of log home living are the main attractions of modern log construction, according to the local distributors. The logs serve as both exterior and interior walls, fitted with tongue-and-groove construction and padded with a hardboard spine and insulating foam. Most log home owners heat with one well-placed woodstove and an auxiliary furnace for emergencies.

Although most kits are bought for use as a primary home, some are bought as weekend retreats. A recent trend has been toward one large master bedroom on the ground floor, with two smaller bedrooms on the second floor.

But, the fun lies in the building of the log home. With a few simple tools and a little muscle, one can "raise" a house in a matter of days, just like the pioneers.

Contemporary designs offered by local log home dealers include a cedar chalet (far left) offered by S and W Log Homes, the cedar "Virginian" (center) offered by Boyne Falls and a pine solar energy model distributed by P.L. Kyger for Real Log Homes.

THERESA BEALE, from Richmond, Va. is a senior majoring in communication arts and minoring in political science. She plans a career with a metropolitan newspaper.

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Game of Endurance

Rugby combines the brutality of football with the high speed intensity of soccer

Article by Cay Wyatt
Photography by Gino Bell

Ruck Over!
The player with the ball hugs it and drops to the muddy ground. Team-mates rush to the prone player, interlocking their bodies in a human web. A sneering force, they dare the opposition to steal the ball.

Straining, pushing, grunting, the two teams battle for possession. The scrumhalf lunges for the ball, snatches it, and breaks away just as the referee calls halftime.

Bruised, bloodied and battle-

Rugby, traditionally a man's game, is quickly becoming a woman's sport.
Above, women ruggers show that they're not afraid to get rough during a game. At left, JMU rugby player Terry Vanderveen.

weary, the players straggle off the field.

The game is rugby. The players are women.

Rugby has always been known as a rough sport. It combines the brutality of football with the constant high speed intensity of soccer to create a game considered so rough, that in 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt threatened to abolish it from the United States.

Rugby is traditionally a man's game. Its popularity has spread from its English origins 150 years ago to the United States. It's a game of extreme physical endurance and intense body contact.

But rugby is quickly becoming a woman's sport. Women of all ages and occupations have caught the rugby fever. More than 150 city and college teams play the sport nationwide. Spare time away from jobs, kids, housework and college studies is spent on the rugby fields. Tournaments become family affairs where kids, husbands, and boyfriends come to cheer them on to victory and console them in defeat.

The grueling physical demands and the intense competition of the game are the main reasons most ruggers give when describing why they like the game.

"You get into playing for the personal satisfaction," says Marti Jo Redford, a member of the James Madison University rugby team. "If you're not out there to get hit or be hit, or just willing to go for it—you shouldn't be playing rugby."

Curled up on the sofa in her Harrisonburg townhouse, the five-foot, 98-pound wing player says, "It's a good outlet for frustrations and an exciting, high speed game."

Rugby is known as a game of endurance. Two teams of 15 players
each run a white leather ball up and
down a football field with only a five-
ball, the object of the game is to move
the ball over the goal line.
But rugby is different than football
in that only the runner with the ball
may be tackled, and no "high-
tackles"—tackles above the
shoulders—are allowed.
In rugby, players do not use padd-
ning or helmets. Wearing shorts,
socks, cleats, and a thin jersey
bearing a wide single strip across the
chest, ruggers are dressed for a
spontaneous game, according to a
JMU English major, explains, "you take
the attitude of 'this one's for you,
sweetie.'" There is no real stereotype female
rugby player, ruggers insist. The
rugged female jock is more the ex-
ception than the rule.
Ruggers have noticed a difference
between women and men players.
"Women are definitely more vicious
players than men. They kick, push
and pinch," Marti Jo says. "Men
seem to take a tackle for what it is,
while woman tend to take it per-
sonally." The women seem to argue
more on the field, and when they're
hit, they want immediate revenge,
she adds.
"When you see a player coming
towards you who hit you earlier in the
game," Terry Vanderveen, a JMU
English major, explains, "you take
the attitude of 'this one's for you,
sweetie.'" There is no real stereotype female
rugby player, ruggers insist. The
rugged female jock is more the ex-
ception than the rule. Women players
include sorority sisters, bookworms
and tomboys who have yet to outgrow
their rough and tumble years.
Some city teams, such as the
Norfolk Breakers, are made up of
housewives, businesswomen and
factory workers who have made
rugby one of the main family
recreational activities.
The quest for a good time is one
factor all teams have in common,
says Patti, as she glances up from a
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when the first games were played. Rugby songs are variations of well-known favorites used as odes to the rugby way of life. “The Twelve Days of Rugby” and “Marryin’ Kind” are favorites. Most teams know all the songs, although each has its speciality.

Rugby is considered a social sport. “Not only do you become close to your teammates, but you meet others from all over when you play,” says a former player.

“There’s the personal satisfaction involved. When you finish a game, you’re exhausted. But then you’re ready to relax with the beer, the songs and your friends. You get to reminiscing about the game and get your second wind.”

Staying in prime physical condition is of utmost importance, and getting in shape for a big game is an obsession for many players.

CAY WYATT, from Scotch Plains, N.J., is a JMU senior majoring in communication arts who plans a career in television writing and production.
Coping with Cancer

Make Today Count helps ease the pain and fear of the terminally ill and their families

Articles by Cindy Elmore
Photography by Gino Bell

Burdine contracted breast cancer 17 years ago. She had a mastectomy the next year, but in 1979 the cancer returned, this time in her lymph nodes.

Missy’s mother died of breast cancer when Missy was 12. Although she suffered with the disease for years, Missy’s mother did not share the cancer experience with her daughter.

Lillie discovered that she had a malignancy last year, following a bout with the disease 10 years ago. Her friends would not discuss Lillie’s illness with her, believing she would die soon.

Burdine, Missy and Lillie share a common bond—their experiences with cancer. Feeling a need to share their emotions about the disease, Burdine Davis, Missy McMullen and Lillie Hogsett joined an organization in Staunton that serves as an outlet for patients with life-threatening illnesses, their friends, relatives and other interested individuals.

This national organization is Make Today Count. The group encourages new members to live each day more meaningfully.

Make Today Count (MTC) “is a place where people can be honest knowing other people in the group are not going to think less of them. We’re helping them to get through the difficult stages of a life-threatening illness and to realize all we have is today,” says John Deehan, a founder of the Staunton-West Augusta chapter.

Following a cancer reoccurrence last year, Burdine Davis contacted Make Today Count in Staunton, seeking others to share her experiences with.
"It didn't affect me when the doctors told me I had cancer. I feel like there is nothing wrong with me, that I am going to live a long time. I decided I am going to fight this thing," says MTC member Lillie Hogsett.

The Mount Solon resident and his wife, Neen, began the MTC chapter in April 1977, based on research about the national MTC organization for a "Death and Dying" course they took together at Blue Ridge Community College.

"We want to get the message across that a terminal disease need not mean you have to stop living. It can be the beginning of a whole new chapter in life," John stresses. A mutual support group, MTC is composed of individuals who have encountered life-threatening illnesses, either personally or as a family member.

For MTC member Burdine Davis, whenever cancer was mentioned in conversation, her husband said, "Don't talk about it; I don't want to hear about it." So Burdine rarely mentioned her cancer for 16 years. Following her second cancer bout last year, Burdine was placed on a two-year chemotherapy plan which doctors hope will be 40-to-60 percent effective.

This time, the vivacious, curly gray-haired woman told her husband, "I will talk about it," and she contacted MTC. There, she is able to share the pains and depressions often associated with chemotherapy treatments.

The 40-member Staunton MTC chapter meets twice a month in the King's Daughters Hospital conference room. Average attendance is 15-to-20 each meeting, and all members are from Staunton or surrounding communities.

Although additional chapters exist in Charlottesville and Richmond, the Staunton chapter has been called the strongest branch in Virginia by the local board of the American Cancer Society.

"Death—we used to pretend it didn't happen," Neen says. "There was a time when you didn't say 'cancer.' Obituaries never said 'cancer,' they said 'long illness.' We're a death-denying society."

For this reason, family members and friends of the cancer patient, like Burdine's husband, often do not understand the emotional aspects of life-threatening illnesses, and consequently do not allow the patient to communicate his real needs.

John adds that communication is the best way to help a cancer patient live with his disease. MTC's goal is to help the individual learn to speak freely about his illness. Once the individual opens up, he has taken the first step in accepting the situation, a necessity for living life to the fullest.

According to Missy, it is not only the dying patient who goes through the painful process, but also those around him.

An exuberant junior at James Madison University, Missy regrets that her mother did not share her thoughts about death with family members.

"Basically, I'm on the other side. I've lived with somebody who's had cancer," Missy explains. "My mother was sick; she was dying, but she never discussed it with us. In a letter, she wrote, 'I feel it has been good for me to carry this load alone.' We all have that tendency when we're hurting—we don't want to hurt anyone else."

Neen agrees that like Missy's mother, some people choose to be private about their illnesses. They find MTC's openness more than they can cope with. Because dying is an intensely personal experience, some simply do not want to share their feelings, she explains, adding that some members have attended several meetings, never admitting they had cancer.

Meetings are conducted on an informal basis, since members are neither required to attend nor share in the discussion. Simple progress reports are given on the conditions of members unable to meet with the group. A moderator is selected for each session to discuss his own experience with cancer and to offer advice and to stimulate conversation.

Medical details are not frequently mentioned, except to keep abreast of each other's progress. A major problem when MTC was begun in Staunton was that local medical professionals were concerned the group would recommend certain treatments or doctors to the members. But after a panel presentation, the group gained the confidence of most local doctors and nurses.

"What we do is discuss how you want to be treated if you are dying," John adds. "Most say they do not want to have pain. People are not
afraid of death, but of the dying process." Since its beginning, two members of the Staunton MTC have died.

Publicity for the group mainly is by word-of-mouth, Neen says, although the American Cancer Society recommends the group to patients, and brochures are left in hospitals and other public places. In addition, Dave McKnight promotes the group in his "Death and Dying" course at Blue Ridge Community College, as does Dr. Cecil Bradfield in his JMU course. Meetings are announced in local newspapers and on Staunton's WTON radio station.

Most of the publicity stresses MTC's emphasis on attitudes. The group has discussed several "mind over cancer" theories. John explains that a cancer patient's attitude is extremely important since the expectation of death affects the balance of his life.

Lillie represents the example of a member of the Staunton MTC. She died.

John Deehan, founder of the Staunton MTC chapter, organizes bi-weekly meetings on an informal basis. He welcomes any interested persons in joining the group.

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**A best seller. Versus the best.**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Bose 301**</th>
<th>Micro-Acoustics FRM-3ax</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tweeter</td>
<td>One, fixed.</td>
<td>One, rotatable, rim-damped.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tweeter mounting</td>
<td>Attached directly to baffle.</td>
<td>Isolated from baffle by damped suspension and separate compartment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>High freq. dispersion control</td>
<td>Rotatable rectangular plate with control, mounted in front of fixed tweeter.</td>
<td>Rotatable Vari-Axis® tweeter with five position detented control.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bass enclosure volume</td>
<td>929 cubic inches.</td>
<td>1210 cubic inches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bass load positioning</td>
<td>Single ducted port directly under tweeter.</td>
<td>Twin-ducted port positioned on opposite sides of woofer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabinet panel thickness</td>
<td>3/4&quot; throughout.</td>
<td>1/2&quot; front panel; 3/4&quot; sides and rear; 1/2&quot; tweeter compartment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>17&quot;W x 10&quot;H x 9&quot;D.</td>
<td>21 1/2&quot;W x 12 1/8&quot;H x 9&quot;D.</td>
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<td>Weight</td>
<td>15 1/2 lbs.</td>
<td>24 1/4 lbs.</td>
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<td>Warranty</td>
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<td>10 years (full).</td>
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Compare these two speakers, and you'd probably expect the one on the left—with the lower price—to be the better seller. You'd be right... but is it the better value? Before you decide, consider how much more a little more money will buy.

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Ralph Sampson looks to the future

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Cancer patient with a conviction that she will win her personal battle with the disease.

"It didn't affect me when the doctors told me I had cancer," the small gray-haired woman says. "I was the same person. I feel like there is nothing wrong with me, that I'm going to live a long time. I decided I am going to fight this thing."

Lillie and all members stress the genuine friendship, care and mutual bond evident within the group. "We get together and talk about whatever is on our minds," says Doris Thompson, a volunteer with the American Cancer Society. "It's one big family-type situation. If somebody is down and we feel like they need a party, we plan a party for them. People express things in that group they cannot express with their own families."

Because of the mutual support they receive from each other, MTC members have gone into surrounding communities, to promote MTC and explain the lifestyles and needs of cancer patients. About two times a month, the Deehans and other members are asked to explain the program to college classes, church groups and radio and television stations.

The programs are successful because the members are open and honest. "People look for answers that will touch them, and it is therapy for the patient," John adds.

Prior to the Staunton group, the national MTC organization was started seven years ago by a Burlington, Iowa, newspaperman who had cancer. Orville Kelly wrote articles describing his illness and resulting emotions. His stories were published nationally and, in response, cancer patients throughout the country contacted him.

Because of this interest, Kelly organized the first MTC group in Burlington, inviting terminally ill patients and their families to attend.

As a fitting theme for the group, Kelly wrote, "I do not consider myself dying of cancer, but living despite of it. I do not look upon each day as another day closer to death, but as another day of life, to be appreciated and enjoyed. It is indeed the quality of life that is important, not the quantity."

To the Staunton MTC members, Kelly's theme is not used as an idle poster to hang on the wall or as a stamp on a pamphlet, but rather, as an ideal for life itself.
Local Group Began with a Class and a Couple

The history of the Staunton Make Today Count chapter dates back to Easter 1974 when a successful New Jersey stockbroker and his wife visited friends in the Shenandoah Valley. Immediately attracted to the small community of Mount Solon, John and Neen Deehan bought property and moved their family to Virginia.

In Virginia, Neen followed up on her interest in the subject of death and dying by convincing her husband to join her in taking McKnight's course at Blue Ridge Community College. As a class project, Neen plunged into researching MTC.

John hoped to "hang from his wife's coat-tails," and receive a good joint-project grade, based on Neen's work. But gradually, the subject engrossed him as much as it did Neen. Following their class presentation, the couple was asked to join the board of the local American Cancer Society in beginning the Staunton MTC chapter.

The Deehans are modest about their contribution to the organization. "Neen and I didn't single-handedly start MTC," John says. "An organization like this can't have any stars."

Neen, 39, is an attractive woman with dark hair, dark eyes and an ever-present smile. An office manager for B.C. Clemmer Contractor, her enthusiasm for MTC and genuine concern for its members are unmistakable.

She is unsure why her interest began in death, although it did start when her grandmother was dying.

John, 41, is a tall, bearded man, confident in his knowledge of what MTC provides its members. He takes a sincere interest in every individual in the group. He is also director of the Town Center Project, a renovating program for downtown Staunton.

John and Neen asked Orville Kelly to attend the first Staunton MTC meeting at Mary Baldwin College in April 1977. At one of the first meetings, a non-ill member asked what he could do to help a cancer patient. An ill member angrily told him there was no way he could help, because he could not possibly know what the cancer patient experiences or needs. But the next week, the patient returned, apologetic and ready to share in the discussion again.

"Losing your health is a major loss, but some people don't seem to experience the anger," Neen says. "Some people in the membership have said, 'I would rather know I'm seriously ill and know I'm dying soon because I'll make my life count more.' Not everyone feels this way, but some say they don't regret having the cancer."

In addition to the mutual support MTC offers its members, Neen emphasizes the sincere and strong bonds of friendship between members. "There's a great sense of family in the group," she says. "These people have a tremendous sense of humor; you can only be sad for so long."

John agrees, adding, "You're only going to die once. If you're going to die psychologically every day for the rest of your life, it will be a tremendous waste."

CINDY ELMORE, a JMU junior from Poquoson, Va., with a double major in communication arts and political science, plans a journalism career.

Neen and John Deehan are modest about their contributions to MTC, but nevertheless have been called the backbone of the group.
From the Ministry to MTC

An interest in death education led to a satisfying life

"It is a very hard thing for people to accept the reality of their own death. I tend to agree with the point of view that once you have come to terms with your own mortality, you are in a lot better position to appreciate life."

Dr. Cecil Bradfield, a sociology professor specializing in death education at James Madison University, worked with the Deehans as a charter member founding the Staunton Make Today Count chapter.

"I became interested in the MTC program after hearing Orville Kelly speak at Mary Baldwin College," Bradfield says. After the lecture, Bradfield discussed organizing a local MTC chapter with the Deehans and has since been actively involved with the program.

Bradfield first became interested in the subject of death during his Lutheran ministry training. "I was taught how to perform funerals, but not how to deal with the grief of the survivors." Bradfield explains that he also felt uncomfortable in dealing with the terminally ill.

As part of his training, Bradfield accompanied his supervising minister on deathbed visits. "This was a very positive experience for me, because it relieved a lot of my anxiety about death," he says.

Bradfield, who graduated from the seminary in 1965, began graduate and doctoral studies while also working with his congregation. In 1971, he accepted a position to teach full-time at JMU. "I am not dissatisfied with the ministry," he says. "It has been my lifelong ambition and continues to be part of my self-identification, as does teaching."

A major impact on Bradfield's decision to become a death educator occurred in 1975 when his father died. A year later, he began teaching a sociology course in death and dying.

"My father's death provided a kind of quantum-leap in my un-
I ask them to discuss the actual process of dying by even a pet. Then I ask them to discuss what they would get him anything he needed—a glass of water, or whatever.”

Bradfield’s broad physique dominates his office, which is filled with religion and death texts, as he discusses his family’s reaction to the topic of death. “My wife, Nancy, and I were brought up in a time when death was a very taboo subject. You didn’t discuss it any more than you had to.”

In contrast, Bradfield’s 10-year-old daughter Anne seems to be comfortable with the subject of death. “When my father was dying, Anne would get him anything he needed—a glass of water, or whatever.”

Bradfield says that his daughter had no fear of what was happening. Her questions regarding death have always been answered straightforwardly, he says. She has also attended some of his classes and accompanied his students to the funeral home.”

Bradfield says he enjoys teaching, but admits that he doesn’t really know what his future will be. He says he would like to become more involved in the studies of gerontology, death and dying. He is presently doing nursing home volunteer work for a research project dealing with death and the nursing home patient.

“If I found out I was going to die tomorrow, I think I would have a sense of completeness about my life,” Bradfield says. “I’ve told the people I’m close to that I love them very much. I try to keep up-to-date, so I’ll feel I’ve said everything I wanted to tell them.

“I’ve done the type of things I’ve wanted to do—I feel very good about that.”

NICKI CONSTANTINOS, from Burke, Va., is a JMU junior majoring in communication arts and minoring in psychology. She plans a career in magazine production.

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Massanutten Peak, white farm houses, winding mountain roads, red barns. Most of us can only admire the Shenandoah Valley landscape, while others can capture its beauty on canvas.

This scenery is what directly or indirectly attracted three area landscape artists to the Valley—Lorinda K. Palin, a Connecticut native; Robert Olmstead, a New Yorker who came here as a student; and Richard Farrell, a Vermont schoolteacher and coach. All were drawn to the Valley for different reasons, but all stay for one—to portray the beauty and wonder of the area and to share these representations with its residents.

These artists, who have shown their work at numerous art shows and sales throughout the Valley, agree that in a majestic surrounding much of one's self can be put into a painting. It is important to search for things that lend themselves to what the painter is trying to convey. Landscape artists should always be looking for interesting or appropriate scenery that fits their individual moods and styles. Whether ready with camera or canvas, they must be prepared for the right moment.

Bob Olmstead, for instance, carries a camera and when he sees a subject that interests him, he photographs the scenery and paints it later. Richard Farrell drives around in his orange van constantly on the lookout for ideas. Lorinda Palin can look out the front window of her home or walk down the streets of Elkton and find many of the inspiring subjects she uses in her work.

There is not a lucrative market for paintings in the Valley, according to the artists. Residents don't usually buy spontaneously. "A painting has to hit home," says Farrell, "a familiar scene will sell faster than an unfamiliar landscape."

Each artist approaches painting differently, yet their works convey similar feelings. The serenity and splendor of the Valley is seen in the clearly defined barns and houses of Olmstead, in the gentle mountain tops of Palin, or in the sunlit horizons of Farrell. Although the subjects may be the same, the methods and ideas of the painters featured in the next few pages are varied.
Lorinda Palin

With Soft Colors and Little Detail, Palin Conveys Valley Beauty

Lorinda K. Palin thinks it takes an introverted, intuitive type to be a painter—a person with emotion. If this is the case, then she is the ideal painter.

Palin is a quiet, small-framed woman whose warmth and feeling seem to come from way down inside. She is a mother and wife first, and then a landscape painter.

She paints landscapes because she enjoys the outdoors. Moving to Elkton from Vermont three years ago, Palin has little intention of leaving. "I like the Valley, the beauty of the place," she says.

"My favorite time to paint is in the spring and fall because the colors are beautiful then. When going out to the area to paint, I survey the scenery and then sketch a scene on the canvas." Palin later goes back to finish the work using a palate knife and oils. "Using a palate knife instead of a brush gives me more freedom to paint, and it gives my work a better texture.

"The satisfaction from painting is the same a writer might get from putting his thoughts on paper. You can feel more in nature, that's why I put so much of myself into a painting. I can see growth and change in what I do, both for myself and my work. I usually work on several paintings at once, so that they can be put aside and returned to later with a fresher look and scope. The colors are soft, and I don't worry too much about detail. The overall effect of the work is important to me, not necessarily each individual house or tree.

"You must absorb your surroundings when painting. Certain feelings about the scenery have to be acquired before it can be successfully transferred to the canvas. And it is important to know when a painting is complete; you can overdo it."

Palin recently began doing commissions and concentrating more on her work now that her two daughters are of school age. She hopes to soon establish herself as a prominent painter in the Valley.
Richard Farrell

His One-Man Operation Began with a Set of Kiddie Paints

He started painting when he bought a set of paints for his children for Christmas. And Richard Farrell of Elkton hasn’t put down a paint brush since. "I started painting as a hobby about eight years ago when I was teaching at a high school in Vermont, but I soon realized that I couldn’t paint and teach. So four years ago I quit teaching and came to the Valley.

Farrell’s quiet manner shows through his rough, bearded, fortyish face, yet his sparkling blue eyes reveal a man full of things to say and searching for a way to say them. He speaks enthusiastically about devoting his life to the canvas, while his paint-stained hands fiddle with a pencil, sketching little houses and lines.

"I go right out to the fields or mountains to paint. I can be out there when it is five or 10 degrees above zero or on a beautiful spring day. Sometimes when it’s cold, it’s only after I finish a painting that I realize that my hands are numb. I like to paint looking at the original surrounding and not at a photo or sketch. The only way I can get a true picture of the surroundings is to be
there. In that way, it is easy to borrow a tree or add color from the nearby area.

Farrell paints with oils and brushes. He learned much of what he knows today from reading books and studying with George Cherapov, a well-known Vermont landscape artist. "My work has progressed a lot since I studied with Cherapov. He taught me everything from how to use a paint brush, to his philosophies on life. Cherapov was a great influence on me and my work.

"Since I have no other income, I devote most of my days to painting. I usually drive around in my van until I find something that interests me. Then I set up my canvas and in a few hours, finish my work. I also make my own frames. I'm a one-man operation!

"When I paint, I make a statement everyone should know; it's nice to see people happy when they look at my work. I want them to get as much out of it as I do. However, painting is sort of a private thing. I can't paint with people looking over my shoulder. It is necessary for me to be by myself, so I can concentrate solely on what I am doing and how I am doing it.

"As far as my paintings go, I feel I am more sophisticated now than I used to be. I can see change in my work because you always evolve as a painter; painting is limitless. Everyday, painting is a challenge to me. I paint to keep painting because the important thing is not whether you make it or not, but whether you enjoy it.

"You have to know when to finish a painting. I once read about an artist who carried his paints around with him to art shows and museums to touch up his work right there if something needed to be added. If I have made the statement that I want to make, then my work is complete.

"I like to paint lights and darks. Pretty pictures are not always as important as the forms and shapes represented or the play on light and dark that an artist can add. Remember that a painting is not a copy of something, but an artist's representation of something. I paint the way I see things. That can be the satisfaction received from painting."
Robert Olmstead

I’d Like People to Think My Paintings Are Special Enough to Take Home

“You have to live and breathe painting, and that’s what I do,” says Robert Olmstead, a Valley artist and Harrisonburg High School teacher. “There is a difference between art and painting. One can have an interest in art without ever picking up a paint brush.”

Olmstead, a New York native, moved to the Valley in 1968 as a sophomore transfer student to James Madison University. He discusses his work with a certain enthusiasm that shows his love for what he does.

The walls of his family room are filled with some of his landscape paintings. Olmstead is an exuberant painter—he has a desire to paint all the time. His hands never stop moving as he describes his feelings and attitudes.

“My style is Rembrandtish. The way I use lights and darks is important. I go to the same area at different times of the day to capture light at various stages. I also love to work with detail because it helps to bring out texture on canvas.

“Most viewers are concerned with the end product of a painting and not necessarily with the means. For instance, a combination of camera work and sketches help me to develop my ideas, and I also leave it up to myself to play with color. It is important to put yourself and your ideas into a painting. Every artist has a different style of painting and a different method for creating images.

“Paintings trigger different reactions in people. Art, realism and detail mean something different to everyone. I’d like them to think my painting is special enough to take home.

“I get a personal satisfaction out of painting—I need to paint.”
"There comes a point when you know something is finished, yet it is hard to say a painting is actually done. You are always changing, and what might have been complete yesterday is not complete today. Yet, you can't go back over old work years later and change it because you have learned something new. Growth and development can't be seen in a painter who goes backwards.

"It's not easy to put a price tag on a personal thing like a painting. I guess you have to consider the hours you spend on it and the meaning it has to you."

I would eventually like to spend more time painting, maybe when I retire. I would also like my work to be around when I'm not. Maybe it could hang somewhere to say 'Hey, I was here once!'"

KATHY MCLoughlin, a JMU junior from Annandale, Va., is majoring in communication arts and minoring in French and business and planning a career in public relations.
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